(c) The cost per unit of energy produced at nuclear stations is comparable with the cost per unit of energy produced at thermal power stations which are commissioned at approximately the same time.

Chief of Army Staff's Remarks regarding Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka

1600. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief of Army Staff has made some remarks in an interview in the "Indian Defence Review" regarding the merits of the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka;

(b) whether these remarks have raised a controversy;

(c) whether such remarks are in consonance with the high traditions of political neutrality maintained by the Indian Army; and

(d) whether Government has brought this to the notice of the Chief of Army Staff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (d) The Chief of Army Staff in his interview to the "Indian Defence Review", had expressed his concern over doubts and reservations being expressed in some quarters regarding the presence of the IPKF in Sri Lanka, because such expressions could have an adverse impact on the morale of the personnel of the IPKF. His remarks had no political bias but were aimed at ensuring that the Defence personnel, because of such discussions, might not have occasion to doubt the legality of their presence in Sri Lanka and the legitimacy of the operations they are engaged in.

For the Chief of the Army Staff the morale of his men is a very legitimate concern. Therefore, the remarks have in no way undermined the high traditions of political neutrality of the Armed Forces of the country.

Government are aware of some reactions in the press to the remarks of the Chief of Army Staff, but are not aware of any controversy as such.

Refusal to Plan Allocation for Railways

1601. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has refused an allocation of Rs. 4,300 crores for the Railways' Annual Plan for 1988-89; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI BIREN SINGH ENGTI): (a) and (b) An outlay of Rs. 3,850 crores has been earmarked for the Railway's Annual Plan 1988-89. This level of investment is considered appropriate to meet the projected traffic on the Railways and the development of the sector in accordance with the Seventh Plan priorities.

Indian Casualties in Siachen due to High Altitudinal Problems

1602. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there have been a number of casualties of Indian soldiers due to frost, high altitudinal problems on Siachen Glacier;

(b) if so, what is the number of soldiers who died due to arctic conditions on Siachen Glacier so far; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to remove the deficiencies in the arrangements/facilities to fight the climatic conditions at such a high altitude to prevent the casualities of Indian soldiers?